Lines Worksheet for analysis and design of this live production

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

The play takes place in present day Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids is supposedly one of the best places to live in the country, but it is highly segregated. In this play, the actors recite quotes from many interviews of Grand Rapids citizens that concern racial issues.

2. What is the *intrusion*?

This play does not have an intrusion because it does not have a plot. Rather, it simply addresses racial issues by reciting quotes from the interviews that were conducted

3. What is the *unique factor*?

This play is unique in structure because it is not a normal story with an introduction, plot, etc. Rather than using a story to express racial inequality, this play uses real interviews of the citizens in Grand Rapids.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that should be answered by the end of the play?

Will the racial situation in Grand Rapids improve after its severity is made abundantly clear by the play.

5. Identify some of the most *theatrical moments* in the play and of what importance they were to you.

I thought the most theatrical moment was during the police segment when the white woman recites the story of a black teen who was arrested because he was driving a car that had drugs in it. The car did not belong to the boy and he didn’t know that there was drugs in it, but the police are not interested in this truth, and they kick him in the ribs and he receives jail time.

6. List some of the *themes* of the play.

Gentrification

Racism

Police Brutality

Economic disadvantage because of race

Race and Politics

Religion

7. Describe some possible *images* in the play and how does the *title* help us understand the play.

The title “lines” is a reference to the style of the play. Each of the characters recites “lines” from the interviews conducted in Grand Rapids concerning the racial issues that take place in the city.

8. The production used the stage in a multitude of creative ways to places where the action took place. List some of these that particularly stood out to you.

I thought the use of the boxes was particularly interesting. The boxes fit perfectly into the stage, but the characters often took them out of the ground when they were speaking. I took this to be symbolic of the breaking of conformity that is required to confront racial issues. When the boxes are in the ground, they represent conforming just to “fit in”. Thus, when the actors are speaking about the racial issues, they take a box out to show that they are not conformists.

9. Projections and lighting also played an important role in the performance. Discuss the use of both to achieve the intended effect.

I particularly enjoyed the lighting utilized in the segment that dealt with police brutality. The dark red lighting really created a dark mood that helped make the injustice of the police toward black people evident. Also, the actors use of flashlights to illuminate their faces made it seem like they were in an interrogation cell, which made the scene more effective.

10. Live and recorded sound played a role in this production. What were some of the memorable uses of these to support the stories that were told.

The use of the police sirens and “get down on the ground!” recorded sound was very effective in setting the mood for the police scene. The use of the drums was effective in setting the mood throughout the play. For example, the drums would pick up and become more frantic during intense scenes, and then would settle back into the regular rhythm for more calm scenes.